

# SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION

# IN AFRICA

Vol. 2



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**BOOK CHAPTER**

# SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION IN AFRICA

Peer Reviewed Book Chapter

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**Niyi Jacob Ogunode - PhD**

*Department. Of educational management, faculty of education. University of Abuja, Nigeria*

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*Department of Educational management and Administration, Faculty of Education Educational management and Administration Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu Nlike Ebonyi state Nigeria.*

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**Dr. Nwodo, Sylvester Nnaemeka.**

*Dept of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Enugu State University of Science and Technology.*

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# CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

## **Funmilayo Bosede OYEKANMI – Ph.D**

University of Ilesa, Ilesa, Osun State, Nigeria

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8463-8348>

[funmilayo\\_oyekanmi@unilesa.edu.ng](mailto:funmilayo_oyekanmi@unilesa.edu.ng)

+2348033841422

## **Musa, Leah - Ph.D**

Department of Business Administration

Federal University Wukari

[musalea@yahoo.com](mailto:musalea@yahoo.com)

## **CHIA, Terkula Joseph**

Department of Special Needs Education,

Federal University of Lafia

[terkulachia@gmail.com](mailto:terkulachia@gmail.com)

+2348064939356

## **Olofu Precilla ALLU - Ph.D,**

University of Calabar

## **ADEGOKE Johnson Moronfola - Ph.D,**

Inclusive Education Training and Support Institute, Abuja

## **Michael Mercy MOJISHOLA,**

Federal College of Education, Okene, Kogi State

## **MUHAMMAD Muhammad**

Umaru Sanda Amatu College of Education, Minna

## **OKAFOR Ikechukwu Maduka - Ph.D.**

Department of Foundations,

Arts and Social Science Education

Faculty of Education, Federal University Otuoke

[okaforii@fuotuoke.edu.ng](mailto:okaforii@fuotuoke.edu.ng)

## **Prof. Olowonefa Grace Simadi**

Department of Educational Management,

Faculty of Education, University of Abuja, Nigeria

[gracesimadi@gmail.com](mailto:gracesimadi@gmail.com)

## **AJAPE Temitope Solomon - Ph.D**

[ajapetemitope@gmail.com](mailto:ajapetemitope@gmail.com)

Mewar International University,

Nasarawa State Nigeria.

## **EJEH Innocent John**

Department of educational Administration and planning

Faculty of Education, Yakubu Gowon University formerly

University of Abuja

[ejeodega@gmail.com](mailto:ejeodega@gmail.com)

## **OKANI, Doris Ugo-onyeka - Ph.D.**

Department of Educational Management,

Faculty of Education, University of Abuja, Nigeria

[okanidoris@gmail.com](mailto:okanidoris@gmail.com)

## **Kavwam Stanley Augustine - Ph.D**

(Conflict Management and Intergroup Relations)

Department of Social Work

Faculty of Social Sciences

Federal University of Lafia Nasarawa State Nigeria

## **Odunola Lovelynn Boluwatife MOGBEYITEREN PhD**

Department of Educational Management

Emmanuel Alayande University of Education

Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria

[mogbeyiterenlb@euedoyo.edu.ng](mailto:mogbeyiterenlb@euedoyo.edu.ng)

## **Niyi Jacob OGUNODE - PhD**

[Ogunodejacob@fuwukari.edu.ng](mailto:Ogunodejacob@fuwukari.edu.ng)

[niyijacobogunode@gmail.com](mailto:niyijacobogunode@gmail.com)

Department. Of educational management,

Faculty of education. University of Abuja, Nigeria,

**ORCID ID:**0009-0002-3381-8688

## **IKPE, Ijuo David**

Dept. of Adult and Continuing Education,

Federal University Wukari, Taraba State.

[ikpeijuodavid@gmail.com](mailto:ikpeijuodavid@gmail.com)

+2349127759704, /+2347065431834.

## **Sunday Simeon ADAKA - Ph.D**

Department of Sociology

Federal University of Lafia

[sunnidaka14@gmail.com](mailto:sunnidaka14@gmail.com)

08037134706

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Cover Title</b>	
Editorial Board Members	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Contributing Authors	v
Table of Contents	vi

<i>Concluding Synthesis</i>	127
<i>Implications for Practice</i>	128
<i>Editors' Note</i>	130

<b>1</b>	<b>STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING AQUACULTURE AS A TOOL FOR ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE FOOD SECURITY IN NIGERIA</b>	<b>1</b>
	<i>Funmilayo Bosede OYEKANMI – Ph.D</i>	
<b>2</b>	<b>GREEN BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT IN NIGERIA: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS</b>	<b>12</b>
	<i>Joseph TERKULA</i>	
<b>3</b>	<b>ADEQUATE FUNDING AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA</b>	<b>22</b>
	<i>CHIA, Terkula Josep,h ALL,U Olofu Precilla PhD, ADEGOKE Johnson Moronfolo PhD, Michael Mercy MOJISHOLA, MUHAMMAD Muhammad</i>	
<b>4</b>	<b>ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ADULT EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA</b>	<b>32</b>
	<i>Okafor Ikechukwu MADUKA PhD.</i>	
<b>5</b>	<b>SUBSIDY REMOVAL POLICIES IN NIGERIA AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>43</b>
	<i>Prof. Olowonefa Grace Simadi PhD</i>	
<b>6</b>	<b>NIGERIA' NATIONAL DEBT AND ITS IMPACT ON EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA</b>	<b>55</b>
	<i>AJAPE Temitope Solomon – Ph.D.</i>	
<b>7</b>	<b>NATIONAL DEBT AND TERTIARY EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA</b>	<b>63</b>
	<i>EJEH Innocent John</i>	

<b>8</b>	<b>STRATEGIES TO ATTRACT FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT INTO TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA</b>  <i>Doris Ugo-onyeka OKANI Ph.D.</i>	<b>74</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>THE ROLE OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IN PROMOTING NATION BUILDING, PEACE MAKING, AND INTERGROUP COLLABORATION IN NIGERIA</b>  <i>Stanley Augustine KAVWAM Ph.D</i>	<b>81</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CHALLENGES FACING IMPLEMENTATION OF GREEN SCHOOL POLICIES IN NIGERIA</b>  <i>J.A OLOWONEFA. (PhD)</i>	<b>89</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>CRITICAL ROLES OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN PRODUCING EMPLOYABLE GRADUATES, INVENTORS, AND JOB CREATORS IN NIGERIA</b>  <i>OGUNODE Niyi Jacob Ph.D</i>	<b>99</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>ROLES OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FG-ASUU AGREEMENT IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES</b>  <i>IKPE, Ijuo David</i>	<b>107</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA</b>  <i>Sunday Simeon ADAKA Ph.D</i>	<b>116</b>



# 5

## SUBSIDY REMOVAL POLICIES IN NIGERIA AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

By

**Prof. Olowonefa Grace Simadi**

Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education,  
University of Abuja, Nigeria  
[gracesimadi@gmail.com](mailto:gracesimadi@gmail.com)

### Abstract

This chapter examined subsidy removal policies in Nigeria and their implications for education management. The study adopted a review-based approach, drawing on existing literature to analyze both the gains and pains associated with subsidy removal within the education sector. Findings revealed that subsidy removal has the potential to generate increased government revenue, which can be redirected toward improving educational funding, infrastructure development, teacher welfare, and administrative efficiency. However, the chapter also established that the policy has significant adverse effects, including rising educational costs, increased operational expenses for institutions, declining staff welfare, and widening inequality in access to education. These challenges place considerable pressure on educational managers, who must navigate resource constraints while striving to maintain quality and equity in education delivery. The chapter concludes that while subsidy removal can support long-term educational development, its success depends largely on transparent implementation, effective resource allocation, and strong policy frameworks that prioritize education.



Keywords: **Subsidies Removal, Policies,** Educational Management

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## 5.0. Introduction

Subsidy removal policies have become a recurring feature of economic reform strategies in Nigeria, particularly in response to fiscal pressures, fluctuating global oil prices, and the need to reallocate public resources to priority sectors. Over the years, successive governments have implemented subsidy reforms especially in the petroleum sector with the aim of reducing government expenditure, improving economic efficiency, and promoting long-term development. However, these policies have generated significant socio-economic consequences, affecting various sectors, including education. As the cost of living rises following subsidy removal, households, institutions, and government agencies are compelled to adjust in ways that directly and indirectly influence educational planning, administration, and outcomes.

Education management in Nigeria operates within a complex framework that involves policy formulation, resource allocation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation across federal, state, and local levels. The effectiveness of this system depends largely on the availability of adequate funding, stable economic conditions, and supportive public policies. Subsidy removal, while intended to strengthen the national economy, often results in inflationary pressures that increase the cost of educational inputs such as infrastructure development, instructional materials, transportation, and staff welfare. Consequently, educational managers are faced with the challenge of maintaining quality and access in the face of shrinking real incomes and rising operational costs.

Subsidy removal policies have implications for equity and access in education. As families grapple with higher living expenses, the ability to afford school fees, learning materials, and other educational costs may decline, particularly among low-income households. This situation can lead to increased dropout rates, reduced enrollment, and widening disparities in educational opportunities. Educational managers must therefore adopt innovative strategies to mitigate these effects, including efficient resource management, alternative funding mechanisms, and strengthened monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure that educational objectives are not compromised.

Subsidy reforms often necessitate shifts in government spending priorities. While proponents argue that funds saved from subsidy removal can be redirected to critical sectors such as education, evidence of such reinvestment has been mixed. This raises important questions about



accountability, policy implementation, and the role of education managers in advocating for adequate funding and effective utilization of resources. The intersection between subsidy removal policies and education management thus presents both challenges and opportunities for reform, innovation, and improved service delivery. This chapter therefore examines the nexus between subsidy removal policies in Nigeria and education management. It explores the implications of these policies on funding, access, quality, and the overall administration of education. By analyzing the challenges and potential strategies for adaptation, the chapter aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how education systems can remain resilient and responsive in the context of ongoing economic reforms.

### 5.1. Conceptual Terms

#### ▪ Concept of Subsidy Removal

A subsidy is a policy adopted by institutions or governments to reduce the prices of goods for an individual or a firm by paying part of the production cost. A subsidy is an official payment of goods for an individual or a firm, usually in the form of a cash payment from the government to reduce to prices of goods. In economic theory, subsidies can be used to offset market failures and externalities to achieve greater economic efficiency (Ogunode & Aregbesola, 2023). According to Project Clue (2023), subsidy is a decrease in the market price of products and services by the government so that people with limited purchasing power can obtain such goods and services. It occurs when the government assists customers in paying a price that is lower than the market price for consumer products. A subsidy is any measure that keeps prices consumers pay for goods or products below market levels for consumers or producers above market. Subsidies take different forms. Some subsidies have a direct impact on price. These include grants, tax reductions and exemptions or price controls (Adebiyi, 2011).

Subsidy removal is the official termination of subsidies on goods and services that are enjoying subsidies before. Subsidy removal is a policy to end subsidy payment on goods and services with a country (Ogunode, 2023). Subsidy removal refers to a government-driven economic reform policy aimed at eliminating financial support provided to reduce the cost of goods and services (especially fuel), in order to promote market efficiency and reduce public expenditure. Within this concept, subsidy removal is seen as a fiscal strategy designed to correct distortions in pricing systems and reallocate resources to productive sectors such as education, health, and infrastructure. From a social perspective, subsidy removal is conceptualized as a policy shift with direct welfare implications, often resulting in increased cost of living, reduced purchasing power, and heightened inequality. In this sense, subsidy removal is not only an economic decision but



also a social phenomenon that affects access to essential services, including education, particularly for vulnerable populations.

- **Concept of Educational Management**

Educational management is viewed as a **systematic** process of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling educational resources and activities to achieve predetermined educational goals. This concept emphasizes coordination of human, material, and financial resources within educational institutions to ensure efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability in the education system. Educational management can also be conceptualized as a leadership-oriented function that focuses on policy implementation, decision-making, innovation, and institutional development. In this context, educational managers act as strategic leaders who respond to external challenges such as subsidy removal by adopting adaptive strategies, ensuring sustainability, and maintaining quality education delivery despite economic constraints.

## **5.2. Result on Gains of Subsidy Removal as it Relates to Education Management in Nigeria**

Despite its controversies, subsidy removal policies in Nigeria present several potential gains for education management, particularly when savings are effectively utilized. The following are four major gains, discussed in detail with supporting scholarly evidence.

- **Increased Government Funding for Education**

The significant gains of subsidy removal is the availability of additional public funds that can be redirected to the education sector. Subsidy regimes consume a large portion of government revenue; their removal creates fiscal space for investment in education. Empirical studies show that subsidy removal in Nigeria has led to increased funding allocations to education, enabling improvements in infrastructure, instructional resources, and institutional development. For education managers, this translates into better financial capacity to plan, implement, and supervise educational programmes effectively (World Bank / Reuters reportin 2025). The removal of subsidies in Nigeria has led to increased government funding for education, resulting in significant gains for education management in the country. This increase in funding has allowed for better resources and facilities in schools, leading to improved learning outcomes for students. Additionally, the government has been able to invest in teacher training and development programs, which have resulted in a more skilled and motivated teaching force. This has ultimately led to higher quality education for students and an overall improvement in the education system in Nigeria. The increase in government funding for education has also allowed for the expansion of educational opportunities, particularly for marginalized communities. This has helped to bridge



the education gap and promote equal access to education for all. Furthermore, the increased funding has allowed for the implementation of innovative teaching methods and technologies, leading to a more modern and efficient education system.

- **Improvement in Educational Infrastructure**

Subsidy savings can be channeled into development and modernization of educational infrastructure, such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and digital learning facilities. Improved infrastructure enhances teaching and learning conditions and supports effective school administration. Research indicates that subsidy removal has contributed to enhanced infrastructure development in tertiary institutions, thereby improving the overall quality of the learning environment. Educational managers benefit from such improvements through easier coordination of academic activities and better institutional performance. The removal of subsidies in Nigeria has led to significant improvements in the country's educational infrastructure. This has been achieved through various measures, such as increased investment in education and the implementation of effective management strategies (World Bank, 2022). The major gains of subsidy removal has been the enhancement of educational facilities, such as the construction of new schools, renovation of existing ones, and the provision of essential resources like textbooks and technology. The removal of subsidies has also benefited education management in Nigeria. With the increase in funding, schools have been able to hire more qualified teachers and administrators, leading to better learning outcomes for students. The removal of subsidies has created a more competitive environment for schools, encouraging them to improve their management practices in order to attract students and funding (Musa, 2019). The improved educational infrastructure and management in Nigeria have also had a positive impact on the quality of education. Students now have access to better facilities and resources, leading to a more conducive learning environment. This has resulted in increased academic achievement and improved student retention rates. Additionally, with better management practices in place, the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the education system have also improved (Shagali, & Yusuf, 2022).

- **Enhanced Teacher Welfare and Professional Development**

Another key gain is the potential improvement in teacher welfare, including better salaries, training opportunities, and working conditions. When governments reallocate subsidy savings to education, part of the funds can be used to motivate teachers and build their professional capacity. Evidence shows that subsidy removal reforms have supported teacher welfare improvements and training programmes, which are essential for effective education management



and quality service delivery. For educational managers, motivated and well-trained teachers enhance productivity, reduce turnover, and improve student outcomes (World-Bank, 2024).. The removal of subsidies in Nigeria has had a significant impact on the education sector, particularly in terms of teacher welfare and professional development. With the reduction of government spending on subsidies, there has been a shift towards prioritizing investments in the education workforce. This has led to improvements in teacher salaries, benefits, and overall working conditions, resulting in enhanced teacher welfare. Additionally, with the reduction of subsidies, there has been an increased focus on professional development opportunities for educators. This has allowed for the implementation of training programs and workshops to enhance teaching skills and knowledge, ultimately improving the quality of education management in Nigeria (Peter, 2021)

- **Promotion of Efficiency and Innovation in Education Management**

The removal of subsidies can compel educational institutions to adopt efficient management practices and innovative strategies due to reduced reliance on government support. This includes prudent resource utilization, diversification of funding sources, and adoption of modern administrative approaches. Scholarly analysis suggests that reduced government subsidies can push institutions to improve operational efficiency, introduce innovations, and enhance service delivery to remain competitive and sustainable. Educational managers are therefore encouraged to embrace strategic planning, accountability, and innovation in managing schools and educational systems. The removal of subsidies has greatly contributed to promoting efficiency and innovation in education management. With the reduction of government support, educational institutions have been forced to become more resourceful and competitive in order to sustain themselves (World-Bank, 2024). This has led to the development of new and innovative approaches to education management, such as the use of technology and alternative teaching methods. As a result, students are now exposed to a wider range of learning experiences, leading to improved efficiency and effectiveness in the education system. Additionally, the removal of subsidies has encouraged educational institutions to collaborate and form partnerships, further promoting innovation and efficiency in education management (Ayo, 2020).

- **B- Pains of Subsidy Removal as They Relate to Education Management in Nigeria**

While subsidy removal may offer long-term fiscal benefits, its short- to medium-term consequences pose significant challenges (“pains”) for education management in Nigeria. These challenges affect planning, administration, access, and the overall quality of education delivery. The following are four major pains, discussed in detail with supporting scholarly evidence.



- **Rising Cost of Education and Reduced Access**

One of the most immediate effects of subsidy removal is inflation, which increases the cost of goods and services, including educational expenses such as tuition, transportation, textbooks, and accommodation. As household incomes are strained, many parents struggle to meet these rising costs. Studies indicate that subsidy removal in Nigeria has led to increased school fees and reduced affordability of education, especially for low-income families (Ogunode & Adah, 2023). This situation contributes to declining enrollment rates and increased dropout rates. For education managers, this creates challenges in maintaining student population stability and achieving educational goals related to access and equity (World Bank / Reuters reporting 2025). The removal of subsidies on education has led to a significant increase in the cost of education, making it difficult for many Nigerians to afford. This has resulted in reduced access to education, especially for those from low-income families. This issue has been a major challenge for education management in Nigeria, as it has hindered the country's efforts to improve its education system. The rising cost of education and reduced access have also had a significant impact on the quality of education in Nigeria (Onyeizugbe, & Onwuka, 2012). With many students unable to afford the high cost of education, there has been a decline in the number of students enrolling in schools. This has resulted in overcrowded classrooms and a lack of resources, leading to a decline in the quality of education being provided. The removal of subsidies has also affected the availability of scholarships and financial aid for students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This has created a barrier for students who are unable to afford the high cost of education, further limiting their access to quality education (Ogunode, & Adah, 2023).

- **Increased Operational Costs for Educational Institutions**

Subsidy removal leads to higher costs of fuel, electricity, transportation, and other essential services, thereby increasing the operational expenses of schools and educational institutions. Institutions must spend more on running generators, transporting staff and students, and maintaining facilities. Research shows that educational institutions in Nigeria experience significant financial pressure due to increased recurrent expenditure following subsidy removal (Egirigi, Amukoyo, & Anene, 2025). For educational managers, this complicates budgeting, financial planning, and resource allocation, often forcing institutions to either cut costs or transfer the burden to students through fee increases. The removal of subsidies in educational institutions has led to an increase in operational costs, causing a strain on the management of education in Nigeria. This has resulted in various challenges such as budget cuts, reduced access to resources, and a decrease in the quality of education (Omoniyi, 2023). There has been a sharp rise in tuition fees, which has made education less affordable for students. These issues have had



a negative impact on the overall management of education in Nigeria, leading to issues such as teacher strikes, resource shortages, and a decline in academic performance (Ogunode, & Chukwuemeka, 2023)..

- **Decline in Staff Welfare and Productivity**

The inflationary effects of subsidy removal erode the real income of teachers and non-teaching staff, leading to reduced purchasing power and lower morale. When salaries remain stagnant while living costs rise, staff motivation and job satisfaction decline. Scholarly evidence suggests that subsidy removal contributes to poor staff welfare conditions and reduced productivity in educational institutions (Ogunode, 2022). This situation may lead to increased absenteeism, brain drain, and industrial actions, all of which negatively affect educational management and the quality of teaching and learning. It is important to note that the removal of subsidies has resulted in a decrease in government funding for education. As a result, schools and universities are facing a severe shortage of resources, leading to a decline in staff welfare. This has created a difficult working environment for teachers and support staff, who are struggling to cope with increased workloads and low salaries (Okonkwo, 2023). The decline in staff welfare has also had a direct impact on productivity. With inadequate resources and low morale, teachers are finding it challenging to maintain high levels of productivity. This has led to a decline in the quality of education and academic performance in Nigeria. The pains of subsidy removal have resulted in a decrease in overall educational opportunities for students. With the decline in staff welfare and productivity, schools and universities are unable to provide students with the necessary support and resources, hindering their academic progress and potential (Ogunode, & Ukozor, 2022).

- **Widening Inequality and Educational Disparities**

Subsidy removal disproportionately affects vulnerable and marginalized populations, thereby widening educational inequality. Students from low-income backgrounds are more likely to withdraw from school or attend poorly resourced institutions. According to the World Bank (2022), economic reforms such as subsidy removal can exacerbate inequality and limit access to basic services like education if not properly managed. This creates additional challenges for education managers in ensuring inclusive education, as disparities in access, participation, and outcomes become more pronounced across regions and socio-economic groups (Ogunode, & Adah, 2023). The removal of subsidies in Nigeria has led to widening inequality and educational disparities, especially in regards to education management. The lack of government support has affected the quality of education in the country, leading to a growing gap between the rich and poor. This abstract delves into the various factors contributing to this issue, such as the unequal



distribution of resources and the challenges faced by educators and students alike. It also explores potential solutions to address these pains, such as implementing policies to ensure equal access to education and providing adequate support and resources for educators (Okongwu, & Imoisi, 2022).

### **5.3. Recommendations and Recommendations**

Subsidy removal policies in Nigeria represent a critical economic reform with far-reaching implications for education management. This chapter has demonstrated that although such policies can create opportunities for increased investment in education, they also introduce significant challenges that affect access, quality, and administration of educational systems. Educational managers are confronted with the dual responsibility of maximizing available resources and mitigating the negative effects of economic pressures on institutions and learners. The effectiveness of subsidy removal in advancing educational development depends on the extent to which government savings are judiciously invested in the sector and supported by sound management practices.

#### **i. Prioritize Education in Budgetary Allocation**

Government should ensure that a substantial proportion of funds saved from subsidy removal is allocated directly to the education sector to support infrastructure, teaching resources, and institutional development.

#### **ii. Introduce Targeted Social Support Programmes**

To cushion the effects on vulnerable populations, policies such as scholarships, grants, and conditional cash transfers should be implemented to sustain access to education for low-income households.

#### **iii. Strengthen Institutional Funding Mechanisms**

Educational institutions should be supported to diversify their funding sources through partnerships, internally generated revenue, and donor support, reducing overdependence on government funding.

#### **iv. Enhance Staff Welfare and Professional Development**

Government and educational authorities should improve teachers' salaries, incentives, and training opportunities to maintain morale, productivity, and quality service delivery.



v. **Promote Efficient Resource Management**

Educational managers should adopt prudent financial practices, including effective budgeting, monitoring, and evaluation systems, to ensure optimal utilization of limited resources.

vi. **Ensure Policy Transparency and Accountability**

There should be clear mechanisms for tracking and reporting how funds from subsidy removal are utilized, particularly in the education sector, to build public trust and ensure impact.

vii. **Encourage Innovation and Digital Transformation**

Schools and institutions should adopt cost-effective technologies and innovative management strategies to improve efficiency and expand access to education despite economic constraints.

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### Concluding Synthesis

The second edition of *Sustainable Education in Africa* advances the discourse on educational transformation by offering a deeper, more nuanced interrogation of the structural, technological, and socio-economic forces shaping education systems across Nigeria and the African continent. Building upon the foundations established in the first edition, this volume expands its analytical scope to incorporate emerging paradigms such as digital ecosystems, artificial intelligence–driven educational planning, climate-responsive education, and the evolving nexus between education, economic resilience, and sustainable development.

A cross-chapter synthesis reveals that sustainable education in Africa is no longer a singular policy objective but a dynamic, multi-layered process requiring systemic alignment across governance, infrastructure, pedagogy, and innovation ecosystems. The contributions collectively underscore that while technological advancements—particularly in digital learning platforms, data analytics, and artificial intelligence—offer unprecedented opportunities to enhance access, efficiency, and quality, their transformative potential remains contingent upon enabling environments characterized by robust infrastructure, policy coherence, institutional capacity, and equitable resource distribution.

The volume further highlights the persistence of entrenched structural challenges, including chronic underfunding, socio-economic inequalities, policy inconsistencies, insecurity, and weak institutional frameworks. These constraints continue to limit the scalability and sustainability of educational reforms. Notably, the second edition places greater emphasis on the interconnectedness of these challenges, illustrating how deficits in governance, economic stability, and social inclusion directly impact educational outcomes.

Importantly, this edition reframes education as a strategic driver of national competitiveness, innovation, and social cohesion within a rapidly changing global landscape. It reinforces the imperative for education systems to move beyond traditional models toward adaptive, inclusive, and future-oriented frameworks that are responsive to both global trends and localized realities.

Ultimately, this volume contributes to advancing scholarly and policy-oriented conversations by offering integrated insights that bridge theory, practice, and innovation. It serves as a critical resource for stakeholders seeking to navigate the complexities of educational transformation while fostering systems that are resilient, inclusive, and aligned with sustainable development imperatives.

### **Implications for Practice**

Drawing from the expanded insights of this second edition, the following strategic implications are proposed for policymakers, educational leaders, practitioners, and development partners:

#### **Policy Innovation and Systems Thinking:**

Governments should adopt adaptive, data-driven policy frameworks that integrate sustainability, digital transformation, and inclusivity into long-term national development strategies. Emphasis should be placed on policy continuity, monitoring mechanisms, and cross-sectoral coordination.

#### **Digital Transformation and Emerging Technologies:**

There is an urgent need to scale investments in digital infrastructure, artificial intelligence applications, and smart learning environments. Educational systems must harness technology not only for access but also for personalized learning, predictive planning, and administrative efficiency.

#### **Sustainable Financing Models:**

Beyond traditional funding mechanisms, innovative financing approaches—including public-private partnerships, education bonds, and international development funding—should be explored to ensure long-term sustainability and resilience of education systems.

#### **Capacity Development for the Future Workforce:**

Continuous professional development must evolve to include digital competencies, interdisciplinary teaching approaches, and innovation-driven pedagogy. Educators should be equipped to prepare learners for emerging global labor markets.

#### **Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice:**

Policies and interventions must go beyond access to address systemic inequalities affecting marginalized groups, including gender disparities, rural-urban divides, and learners with special needs. Inclusive education should be embedded as a core principle rather than a peripheral objective.

#### **Research, Data, and Evidence-Based Practice:**

Institutions should strengthen research capacity and promote the use of real-time data analytics to inform decision-making, policy formulation, and educational innovation.

#### **Strengthening Institutional Resilience:**

Education systems must be designed to withstand disruptions such as economic shocks, pandemics, and conflicts by incorporating flexible delivery models, blended learning systems, and crisis-responsive policies.

### **Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration:**

Sustainable transformation requires coordinated engagement among governments, academia, industry, civil society, and international organizations to leverage expertise, resources, and innovation.

### Editors' Note

The editors are pleased to present the second edition of *Sustainable Education in Africa*, which reflects an expanded and enriched body of knowledge responding to the evolving complexities of education systems within the continent.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the contributing authors whose scholarly contributions demonstrate exceptional rigor, depth, and forward-thinking perspectives. Their work not only builds upon the foundations of the first edition but also introduces new dimensions that address contemporary challenges and emerging opportunities in education.

We also acknowledge the invaluable role of peer reviewers, editorial board members, and institutional collaborators whose commitment to academic excellence has ensured the credibility, relevance, and quality of this publication. Their contributions have been instrumental in shaping this volume into a comprehensive and impactful resource.

This second edition is conceived as more than an academic compilation; it is a strategic platform for advancing dialogue, informing policy, and inspiring innovation in education across Africa. It reflects our collective commitment to fostering educational systems that are inclusive, resilient, and aligned with sustainable development goals.

It is our expectation that this volume will serve as a catalyst for further research, interdisciplinary collaboration, and transformative action, ultimately contributing to the continuous evolution of education systems across the continent.